

# ARTS ACCESS INITIATIVE

The idea of collective action is pretty simple. No single program, organization or institution acting in isolation can bring about large-scale social change on their own. Community-level change requires the concerted efforts of the many players who can contribute to better system performance to band together around a common agenda. Collective action is a new way of working that allows individual efforts to add up to big change.

# Executive Summary

Hundreds of committed individuals and organizations across Houston are working on the Arts Access Initiative. Everyone involved recognizes that making city-wide progress requires banding together to work on a common agenda. Together, we can provide Houston children the opportunity to benefit cognitively, creatively, emotionally, and academically through the arts.

The Arts Access Initiative project is committed to three goals for arts and arts education access in partnership with the Houston Independent School District, area arts and nonprofit partners, and regional community members: **Equity, Impact & Sustainability.**

**The Arts Access Initiative Project** adopted the vision that all children should have the opportunity to benefit cognitively, creatively, emotionally, and academically through the arts. The community assessed the current needs within Houston ISD schools and created action steps to bridge any gaps in a sustainable and transformative way, reaching beyond schools into our community to work together in collective action.

The members of the Arts Access Initiative Project are members of the Any Given Child program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Houston and the Arts Access Initiative Project were selected because of demonstrated commitment to the improvement of education in and through the arts, the community participates in collaborative efforts to provide equity and access in arts education for all students.



## Backbone Organization and Fiscal Agent:

Young Audiences, Inc. of Houston serves as the backbone organization providing staffing, communications, data and financial support for the Arts Access Initiative.

# IDEA

**All Houston ISD students** should have the opportunity to take advantage of the tremendous benefits of arts education.

**Through principal leadership and community partnerships**, each Houston ISD school has the capacity to become a place where the arts are vibrant and valued, regardless of neighborhood or income level.

- 79.7% of Houston ISD children are economically disadvantaged.
- 56.8% are At-Risk and 92.1% are designated Title 1.

**What are the benefits of arts education for all students?**

## Evidence that arts education helps close the achievement gap for low-income students

“In the many types of comparisons that Catterall tracks, arts-engaged low-income students tend to perform more like average higher-income students. ... The findings are compelling because it is rare in education research to encounter the longitudinal comparisons with such sizeable differences across groups.”

— President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, *Reinvesting in Arts Education*, May 2011  
Citing James Catterall’s 2009 study of the National Educational Longitudinal Survey

## Evidence that the arts support today’s education priorities nationwide

“[W]hen children are given the opportunity to act out a written text, their **reading comprehension can actually double**.... [T]he acting-out technique can help children solve word problems in math, too.”

— Annie Murphy Paul, *The Brilliant Report*, citing studies by Arthur Glenberg, Apr. 21, 2014

## Evidence that participation in the arts is linked to academic achievement

“More than 65 distinct relationships between the arts and academic and social outcomes are documented. They include such associations as: **visual arts instruction and reading readiness; dramatic enactment and conflict resolution skills; traditional dance and nonverbal reasoning; and learning piano and mathematics proficiency.**”

“Multiple independent studies have shown increased years of enrollment in arts courses are positively correlated with higher SAT verbal and math scores. High school students who take arts classes have higher math and verbal SAT scores than students who take no arts classes. ...Notably, **students who took four years of arts coursework outperformed their peers who had one half-year or less of arts coursework by 58 points on the verbal portion and 38 points on the math portion of the SAT.**”

— National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement*, 2006

## Evidence that even a single field trip to an arts/cultural organization can strengthen critical thinking skills

“Students who, by lottery, were selected to visit the [Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art] on a field trip demonstrated **stronger critical thinking skills, displayed higher levels of social tolerance, exhibited greater historical empathy and developed a taste for art museums and cultural institutions.**”

— “Art Makes You Smart,” *The New York Times*, Nov. 23, 2013

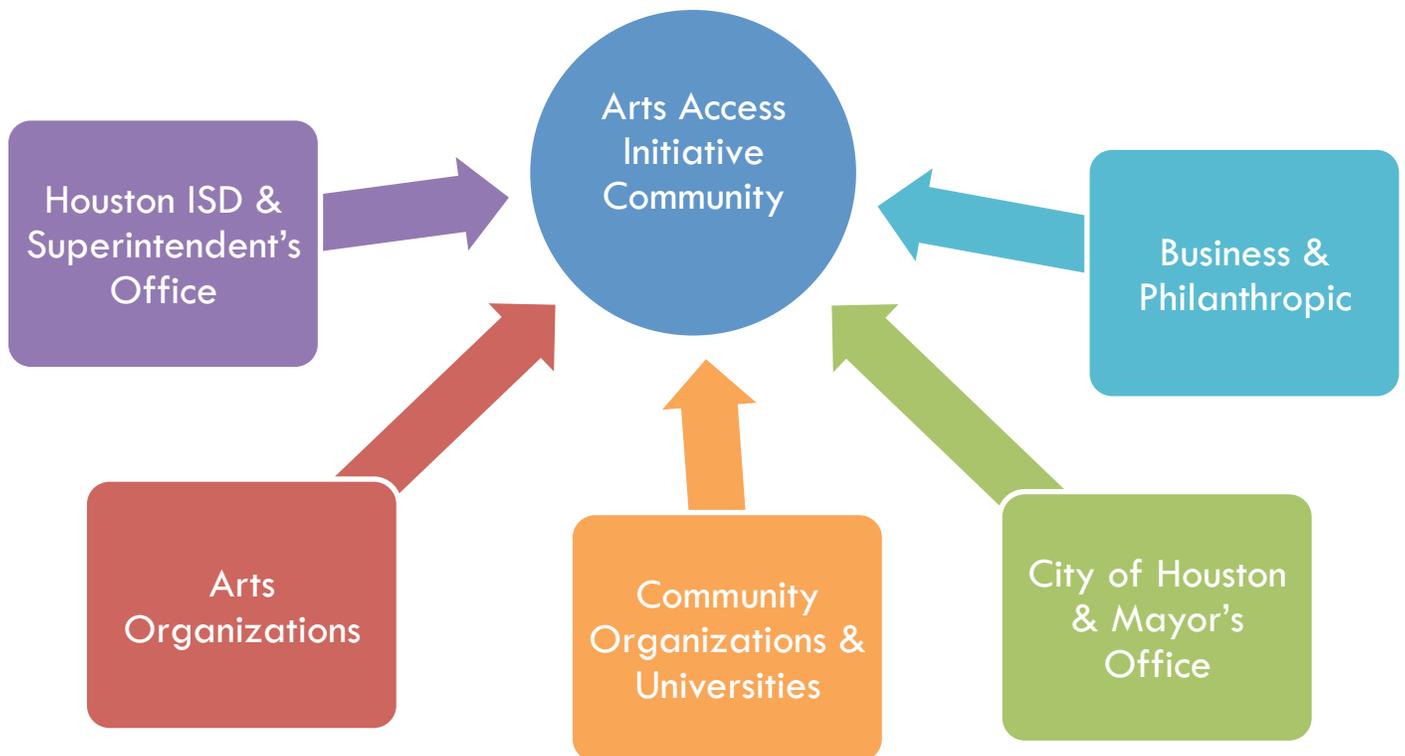
## Evidence that non-profit arts and culture organizations significantly contribute to Houstonians’ income and quality of life

“[T]he nonprofit arts and culture are a significant industry in the Greater Houston Area—one that **generates \$977.7 million in total economic activity.** This spending—\$414.6 million by nonprofit arts and culture organizations and an additional \$563.1 million in event-related spending by their audiences—**supports 29,118 full-time equivalent jobs, generates \$702.9 million in household income to local residents, and delivers \$130.4 million in local and state government revenue.**”

—Americans for the Arts, *Arts and Economic Prosperity in the Greater Houston Area, TX*, 2012

# WORK

Young Audiences of Houston in 2011 (with funding support from The Houston Endowment) in partnership with Houston Independent School District and the City of Houston established a Community Arts Team (CAT) committee to assess the current landscape of arts education in Houston ISD. The committee consisted of business, philanthropic, civic, education, arts and higher education leaders across the city.



## VISION

All Houston children should have the opportunity to benefit cognitively, emotionally, intellectually, and academically through the arts.

# Scope of Work

Received Endorsement from  
HISD Superintendent and  
Houston Mayor

Reviewed Arts Education  
Research

Assembled Community  
Arts Team Committee

Inventoried All Arts  
Involvement in All 209  
HISD K-8 Campuses

Surveyed 11,000 K-8  
General Classroom  
Teachers

Surveyed 195 K-8  
Campus Principals

Surveyed 509  
Community Arts  
Partners

Application for Campus  
Participation

Community Working  
Groups (In Process)

# HISTORY

## Idea

In 2013 – 2014, Young Audiences of Houston (with funding support from The Houston Endowment) in partnership with Houston Independent School District and the City of Houston established a **Community Arts Team (CAT) committee** to assess the landscape of arts education in Houston ISD. The committee consisted of business, philanthropic, civic, education, arts and higher education leaders from across the city.

## Work

The **Community Arts Team** adopted the vision that all children should have the opportunity to benefit cognitively, creatively, emotionally, and academically through the arts. The committee assessed the current needs within Houston ISD schools and created action steps to bridge any gaps in a sustainable and transformative way, reaching beyond schools into our community to work together in collective action.

## Research

The Community Arts Team's research addressed two questions.

1. What benefits do we see in Houston ISD students who currently participate in a high level of arts education?
2. What is the state of arts education in Houston ISD public schools (grades K – 8)?

By studying data from Houston ISD's Research and Accountability Department about currently enrolled students, the Community Arts Team drew the following conclusions:

- The data reflects evidence of correlation of high arts involvement with these benefits, even **when controlled for ethnicity, socio-economic status (SES), English-Language Learners (ELL), Special Education (SpEd), and Gifted and Talented (G/T)**:
  - Decreased disciplinary actions (DAEP, ISS, OSS)
  - Decreased incidence of truancy
  - Increased STAAR passing rates

Based on principals' and teachers' survey responses, the committee determined:

- Both principals and teachers value the benefits of the arts for their students.
- **A significant number of schools said they would like to implement greater access to arts education immediately.**

Drawing on a campus-by-campus study of available arts education opportunities, the Committee determined that despite pockets of success, significant gaps of access existed for many K – 8 schools. (This data is provided later in this document.)

## Goals

The Community Arts Team determined that the goals of the Arts Access Initiative project would broadly address Equity, Access, and Sustainability. With support of The Houston Endowment, Young Audiences of Houston was able to hire a full-time director to facilitate the working groups and community engagement.

In 2014 and 2015, all schools serving K – 8 in Houston ISD were invited to apply to participate in the first year of the Arts Access Initiative project. Due to limited funding capacity 12 schools in year one were included and in year two 25 schools were included.

# RESEARCH

## Data Gathering:

The Community Arts Team's research addressed two questions.

1. What benefits do we see in Houston ISD students who currently participate in a high level of arts education?
2. What is the state of arts education in Houston ISD public schools (grades K – 8)?

## Results of Data Analysis

By studying data from Houston ISD's Research and Accountability Department about currently enrolled students, the Community Arts Team drew the following conclusions:

- The data reflects evidence of correlation of high arts involvement with these benefits, even **when controlled for ethnicity, socio-economic status (SES), English-Language Learners (ELL), Special Education (SpEd), and Gifted and Talented (G/T):**
  - Decreased disciplinary actions (DAEP, ISS, OSS)
  - Decreased incidence of truancy
  - Increased STAAR passing rates
- Students in advanced fine arts **received fewer of all types of disciplinary actions** (sometimes up to 50% fewer).
- More students in advanced fine arts **passed the STAAR test in all subjects than in the comparison group.**

## Evidence of correlation between Houstonians' higher arts involvement as children and pursuing higher education

Asked about their childhood arts involvement, **56% of respondents with a postgraduate education level** said that they were **involved with the arts for two or more years** as a child.

By contrast, **52% of respondents with an education level at high school or less** said that they had **no involvement with the arts** as children.

— Kinder Institute for Urban Research, Rice University, *Houston Area Arts Survey*, Sept. 2012

# RESEARCH

## Surveys and Campus Inventories

Drawing on the work of the Community Arts Team, we designed surveys to gather information about principals' and teachers' attitudes about the arts and beliefs about the value of arts education. We also conducted a campus-by-campus inventory of all schools serving grades K – 8 in Houston ISD to determine what resources were available at each.

### Principals' and Teachers' Attitudes and Beliefs

- 98% of teachers and principals **agreed or strongly agreed that the arts enhance child development.**
- 98% of teachers and 94% of principals **agreed or strongly agreed that the arts are necessary in a balanced curriculum for all students.**
- 100% of principals and 98% of teachers **agreed or strongly agreed that students benefit from access to the arts in school.**
- 100% of principals and 94% of teachers **agreed or strongly agreed that students benefit from access to the arts after school.**
- 96% of teachers and 95% of principals said that **arts integration has “a great deal” or “some” value in helping students learn and retain content.**
- In response to the question “What barriers, if any, inhibit support for arts education or arts integration at your schools?” the top barrier listed by principals was funding. For teachers, it was accountability and testing pressures.
- 40% of teachers and 39% of principals said that new & expanded partnerships with arts organizations needed a great deal of improvement.
- 87% of all teachers said they **wanted arts-based professional development.**

# Behavior Data for Houston ISD High School Students

Students receiving high levels of arts = 2322, 4.3% Asian, 25.2% African-American, 43.9% Hispanic, 19.6% White, 7% Other  
 Comparison group matched on ethnicity, SES, ELL, G/T, and SpEd

	<b>High Arts (Defined as 2+ years of sequential fine arts instruction)</b>	<b>Low/No Arts (All other students as controlled above)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement</b>	15	32	-17 (-53.1%)
<b>In-School Suspension</b>	606	805	-199 (-24.7%)
<b>Out-of-School Suspension</b>	247	429	-182 (-42.4%)
<b>Truancy</b>	18	21	-3 (-14.2%)

Source: Houston ISD Research & Accountability

# Behavior Data for Houston ISD Middle School Students

Students receiving high levels of arts = 2122, 6.5% Asian, 29.7% African-American, 46.9% Hispanic, 16.8% White, 0.1% Other  
 Comparison group matched on ethnicity, SES, LEP, G/T, and SpEd

	<b>High Arts (Defined as 2+ years of sequential fine arts instruction)</b>	<b>Low/No Arts (All other students as controlled above)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement</b>	25	68	-43 (-63.2%)
<b>In-School Suspension</b>	600	1,172	-572 (-48.8%)
<b>Out-of-School Suspension</b>	437	837	-400 (-47.8%)
<b>Truancy</b>	2	5	-3 (-60.0%)

Source: Houston ISD Research & Accountability

# Test Score Data for Houston ISD Middle School Students

Students receiving high levels of arts = 2046, 6.7% Asian, 29.3% African-American, 47.2% Hispanic, 16.8% White, 0.1% Other  
 Comparison group matched on ethnicity, SES, LEP, G/T, and SpEd

	<b>High Arts (Defined as 2+ years of sequential fine arts instruction)</b>	<b>Low/No Arts (All other students as controlled above)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>STAAR Reading Pass Rate</b>	88.1%	82.5%	+5.6%
<b>STAAR Math Pass Rate</b>	80.6%	73.1%	+7.5%
<b>STAAR Writing Pass Rate</b>	87.1%	78.4%	+8.7%
<b>STAAR Social Studies Pass Rate</b>	69.9%	61.4%	+8.5%
<b>STAAR Science Pass Rate</b>	79.5%	72.8%	+6.7%

Source: Houston ISD Research & Accountability

# Surveys and Campus Inventories

The Community Arts Team designed surveys to gather information about principals' and teachers' attitudes about the arts and beliefs about the value of arts education. Committee members also conducted a campus-by-campus inventory of 209 schools serving grades K – 8 in Houston ISD to determine what resources were available at each.

## Principal and Teacher Survey Overview

- 195 Houston ISD K – 8 principals surveyed
- 1,939 Houston ISD teachers surveyed
- Both principals and teachers value the benefits of the arts for their students.
- **A significant number of schools said they would like to implement greater access to arts education immediately.**

### Principals' Attitudes and Beliefs

- Principals placed value on the arts for **child development, arts for a balanced curriculum, and arts integration to learn and retain content.**
- 61% of Principals responded that there was **adequate or more than adequate time for arts-based instructional strategies.**
- When asked, "What barriers, if any, inhibit support for arts education or arts integration at your schools?",
  - 86% of Principals noted **funding** as a barrier.
  - 66% of Principals cited lack of **Professional Development** for teachers as a barrier.
  - 80% of Principals cited **Student Interest or Demand** as not a barrier.

### Teachers' Attitudes and Beliefs

- 89% of all general classroom teachers said they **wanted arts-based professional development.**
- 75% of teachers **strongly agree** that **the arts enhance child development**
- 74% of teachers **strongly agree** that **students benefit from access to the arts in school.**
- 71% of teachers **strongly agree** that **students benefit from access to the arts after school.**
- 92% of teachers **agree or strongly agree** that arts have an impact in enhancing learning for disengaged students.

# GOALS

Based on these findings, the community outlined the following goals for arts education in Houston ISD.

## #1. EQUITY

- **Create and implement an Arts Access Initiative** that promotes academic, creative, emotional and cognitive development for students.
- **Assess and evaluate** the impact of the Arts Access Initiative on students and schools.
- **Publish a “State of the Arts” mirror report** that reflects campus inventories of in- and out-of-school arts learning experiences.

## #2. IMPACT

- **Support Principals** to identify, develop and replicate best practices in arts-based instruction and management through Principals’ Leadership Circle for the Arts.
- **Support Educators** modeling best practices in arts-based instruction through professional development.
- **Support Arts Organizations** and teaching artists through Professional Learning and capacity-building efforts.
- **Support Families and Communities** with resources and information that promotes creative learning at home.

## #3. SUSTAINABILITY

- **Provide communication and advocacy** to increase awareness and support.
- **Identify and mobilize resources** to support implementation.
- **Commend Arts Access schools** that clearly meet goals for arts access and arts excellence annually.

# School Participation Requirements for Implementation

The application to participate was distributed to all campuses serving grades K – 8 through the district’s administrative bulletin.

## The principals who responded committed to:

- **Principal Leadership:** Principal participates in Arts Leadership Circle to design an Arts Access plan that aligns with School Improvement Plans.
- **Arts Access Campus Coordinator:** Campus representative, designated by principal, coordinates resources, distributes information, monitors “State of the Arts” mirror report, and documents fidelity of implementation.
- **Funding Commitment:** Principal’s commitment of campus funding from \$1 per student on arts education activities (up to \$10 per student). Young Audiences of Houston provides matching funds for each participating campus.
- **Professional Development Commitment:** 6 hours of arts-integration professional development training for all campus staff.

## Campus Response - Year One

**46 HISD campus Principals of schools serving grades K – 8 opted in to participate in the Arts Access Initiative.**

- Of those schools, 46% had no full-time art specialists. (21 schools)
- Of those schools, 43% had 1 or no community partnerships. (20 schools)
- Of those schools, 26% had no arts during out-of-school time. (12 schools)

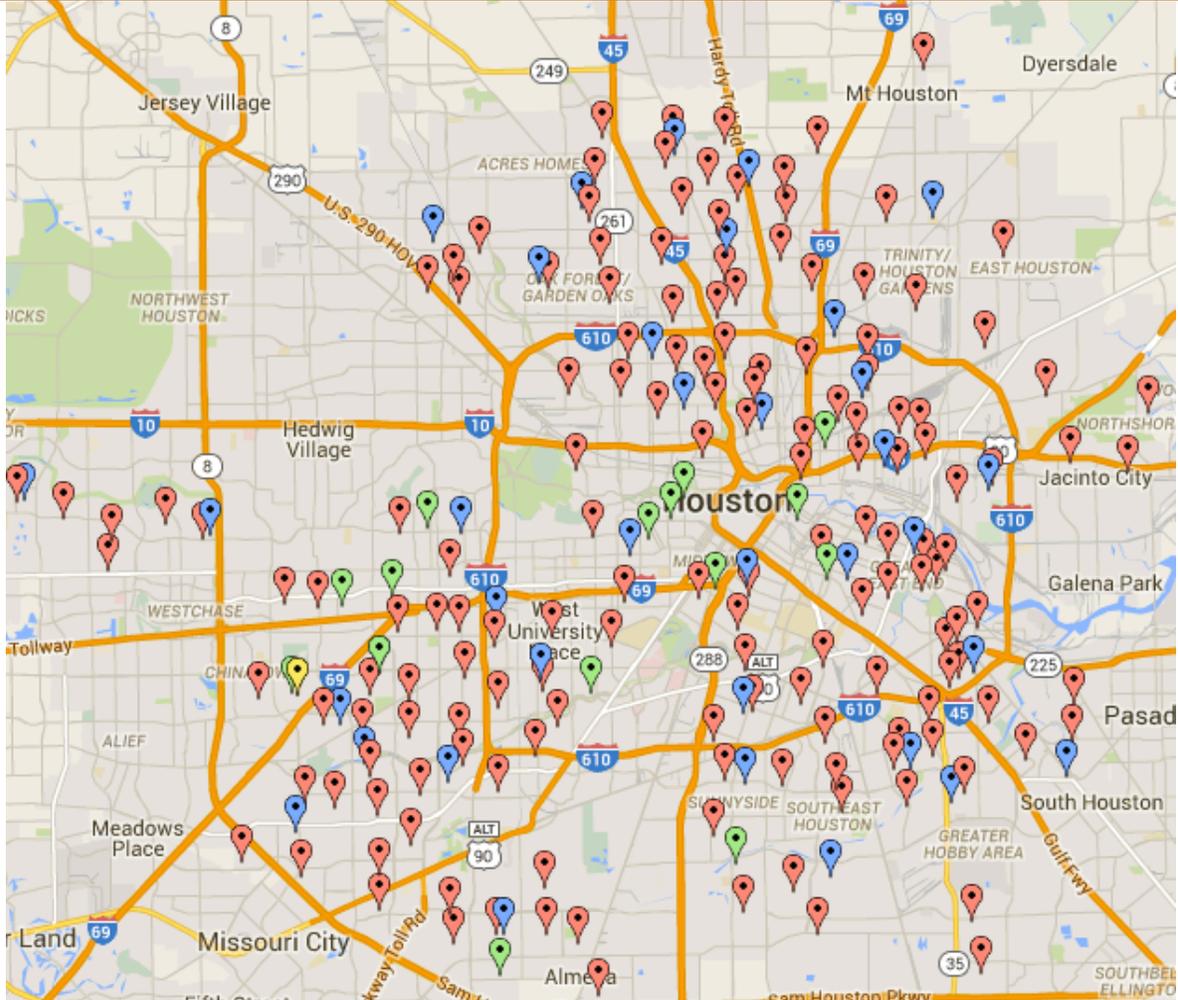
## Potential Resources

The Community Arts Team identified the following resources in Houston’s communities:

- Diverse Community Arts Organization Partners of All Sizes
- Arts-Integration Residencies
- Field Trips to Performances & Museums
- Hands-On Workshops
- After-School Creative Learning Programs
- Online Directory and Resources
- Social Service Organization Partnerships
- Higher-Education Partnerships

# Arts Atlas Online Mapping System Data

INTERACTIVE MAP IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT [WWW.ARTSACCESSINITIATIVE.ORG](http://WWW.ARTSACCESSINITIATIVE.ORG)



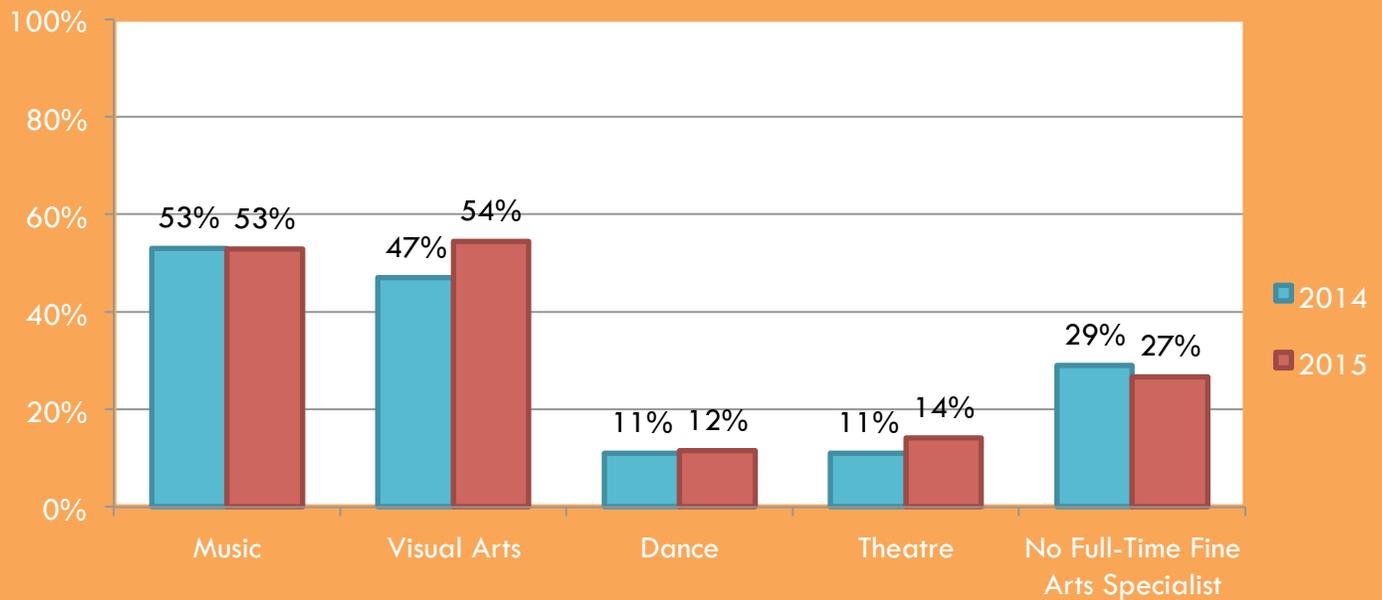
District maps with school-by-school summaries of the campuses inventoried are viewable online at [www.ArtsAccessInitiative.org](http://www.ArtsAccessInitiative.org).

The inventory was conducted between February – June 2015 and reflects **self-reported information** from each campus.

The campus inventory focused on these components:

- Sequential fine arts instruction by a full-time, certified fine arts specialist (fine arts teacher) in music, visual arts, dance, or theatre
- Community arts partnerships with independent organizations offering arts-related field trips, workshops, and/or multi-visit residencies (in-school or after-school) in music, visual arts, dance, theatre, literary arts, or media arts
- Arts in out-of-school time (after-school programs and other activities) in music, visual arts, dance, theatre, literary arts, or media arts

## Campus Progress Full-Time, Certified Fine Arts Specialists Data



### 2013 - 2014

**214 Campuses Serving K – 8 Surveyed  
209 Responses**

Total FT Music Teachers: 163  
 Total FT Visual Art Teachers: 115  
 Total FT Dance Teachers: 25  
 Total FT Theatre Teachers: 24

### 2014 - 2015

**210 Campuses Serving K – 8 Surveyed  
191 Responses**

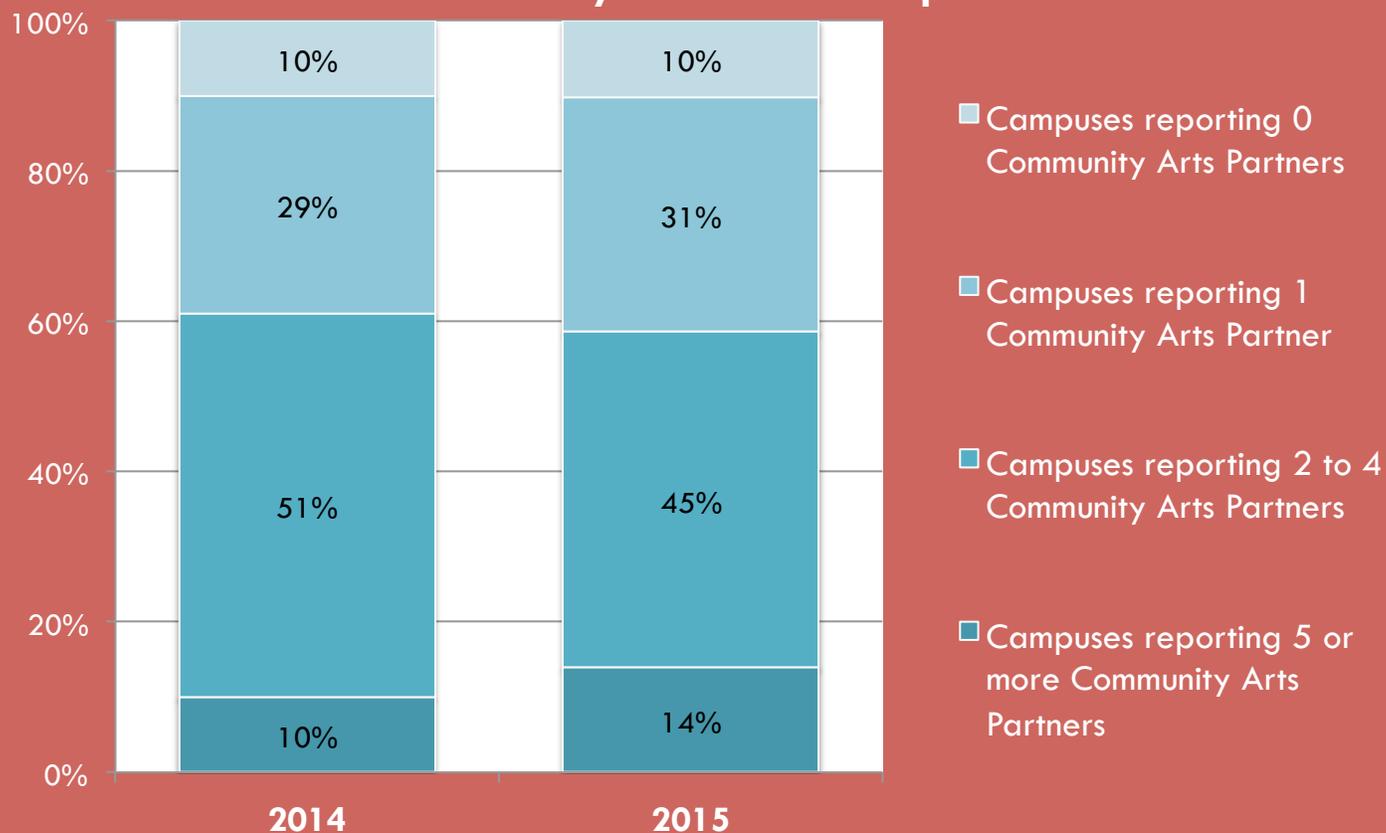
Total FT Music Teachers: 147  
 Total FT Visual Art Teachers: 122  
 Total FT Dance Teachers: 28  
 Total FT Theatre Teachers: 30

## Campus Progress - Arts in Out-of-School Time Data

Arts in out-of-school time could include a class or residency provided by a community arts partner, a club sponsored by a volunteer, etc.

- In 2013 - 2014, **30%** of schools serving grades K – 8 reported **no arts in out-of-school time**
- In 2014 – 2015, **17%** of schools serving grades K – 8 reported **no arts in out-of-school time**

## Campus Progress Community Arts Partnerships Data



### 2013 - 2014

**214 Schools Serving K – 8 Surveyed  
209 Responses**

Total Community Arts Programs: 466

### 2014 - 2015

**210 Schools Serving K – 8 Surveyed  
186 Responses**

Total Community Arts Programs: 448

## Campus Progress - No Arts Access

- In 2013 – 2014, **7%** of schools report **no full-time fine arts specialist on campus, no arts in after-school time, and no arts partnerships** apart from a single third-grade field trip.
- In 2014 – 2015, **3%** of schools report **no full-time fine arts specialist on campus, no arts in after-school time, and no arts partnerships** apart from a single third-grade field trip.

## 2016-2018 Community Partnerships Working Group

Comprised of arts organizations leaders, this group will determine best practices for strong and sustainable partnerships between schools, arts organizations and the district; develop relevant learning opportunities for arts organizations capacity building and to propel high quality work in schools; and foster relationships with Houston ISD schools.

## 2016-2018 Communications Working Group

The Communications Working Group, comprised of cross-sector community leaders, will develop a strategy to spread the word about AAI and the value of arts in education, not only within the district, but throughout the greater Houston community and with State and Federal entities who may be in a position to support the Initiative forward as it continues to grow.

## 2016- 2018 Data Collection & Assessment Working Group

The goal of this group is to determine the most effective ways of obtaining accurate data on the state of arts education in the Houston ISD and support the collective of identified areas of need moving forward.

# PARTICIPATING ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

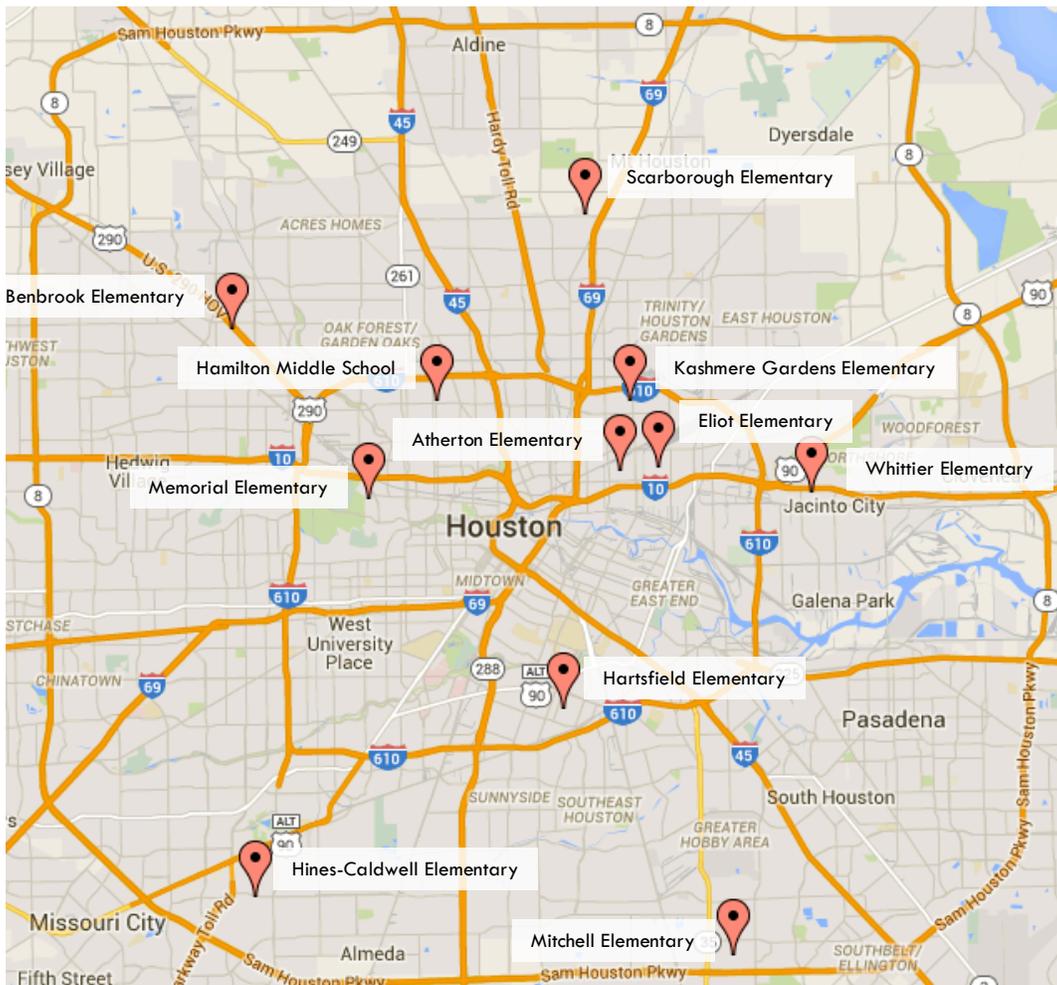
The Arts Access Initiative (AAI) Project collectively engages the partnership of the many arts and cultural organizations across Houston that support the collective efforts of the AAI Project and deliver services to AAI schools. Without our partners we know this work would not be possible in closing the gaps of access for our cities most underserved students.

- AFA
- Alley Theatre
- Anjali Dance Theatre
- Aperio, Music of the Americas
- Apollo Chamber Players
- Ars Lyrica
- Art League Houston
- Aurora Picture Show
- Brazilian Arts Foundation
- City ArtWorks
- Community Artists' Collective
- Contemporary Arts Museum Houston
- DA CAMERA chamber music & jazz
- Dance Houston
- Dance of Asian America
- Express Children's Theatre
- FotoFest Inc.
- The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts
- Houston Ballet
- Houston Chamber Choir
- Hope Stone, Inc.
- Houston Symphony
- Houston Grand Opera
- Houston Youth Symphony
- Main Street Theater
- Multicultural Education and Counseling through the Arts (MECA)
- Mercury – The Orchestra Redefined
- Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
- Musiqqa
- Nameless Sound
- Revels Houston
- River Oaks Chamber Orchestra
- Psophonia Dance Company
- Society for the Performing Arts
- Soul Street Dance Company
- Theatre Under The Stars (TUTS)
- University of Houston Dance Ensemble
- Young Audiences of Houston
  - Umbrella Groups: Brave Little Company, City Dance, Impande Ye Africa, Mixteco Ballet Folklorico, Voices from the Past

# PILOT SCHOOLS

During the first 2015-2016 school year, the 11 schools serving grades K – 8 were served. This pilot program serves as a demonstration of what can be achieved with increasing arts access for students and met the needs of the areas and schools of greatest deficits regarding arts access.

## Arts Access Initiative Year 1 Pilot Campuses 2015 - 2016 School Year, Geographic Reach



### Each of the selected campuses has committed to the following:

- Investment of leadership, time, and funding
- Commitment to include elements of the Arts Access Initiative in their School Improvement Plan and hire fine arts specialists at their campus
- Attendance at twice yearly Arts Leadership Circle Meetings to discuss best practices and challenges with other principals and arts education experts
- Commitment for all teachers to receive arts-based professional development
- Commitment to partner with Community Arts Partners to offer a range of arts-programming experiences

## These selected campuses will receive:

- Campus-based needs assessment and support in creating an Arts Plan
- In-school and after-school arts residencies and workshops
- Live arts experiences
- Advocacy on the school and district's behalf concerning arts education and access
- Access to grant funding for arts programming through Young Audiences of Houston
- Incentives to invest in sequential fine arts instruction for all students

## Next Steps

For this first, second and third implementation pilot year, HISD had an open call for applications for participation, and pilot campuses were selected from the applicants based on a lottery system.

## 2017-2018 PILOT PROGRAM SCHOOLS

In the 2017-2018 school year, the project is working with 44 schools serving grades K – 8. The initiative supports 27,273 students and over 1,600 educators with creative learning experiences in and out of the classroom. This pilot program serves as a demonstration of what can be achieved with increasing arts access for students.

Atherton	Law ES
Attucks MS	Lyons
Bastian	Mading
Benbrook	Memorial
Brookline ES	Mitchell
Codwell	Moreno ES
Cornelius	Ninfa Laurenzo ECC
DeAnda ES	Northline
Durkee ES	Park Place
Eliot	Piney Point ES
Elrod ES	Pleasantville ES
Emerson ES	Pugh
Fleming MS	R. Martinez ES
Foerster ES	Reynolds ES
Foster ES	Scarborough
Gallegos ES	Stevens ES
Garcia ES	Valley West ES
Hamilton MS	Wainwright ES
Henderson (NQ) ES	Walnut Bend ES
Highland Heights	Whittier
Hines Caldwell	
Holland MS	
Kashmere Gardens	
Kennedy	